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STORY

Mask Is Off First AID Man

President Kennedy recently came to the conclusion that New York attorney Foster Hamilton would make a better supply sergeant than reconnaissance man on the New Frontier.

He moved Hamilton's name from a drawer on the left side of his desk, marked "Central Intelligence Agency," to one on the right side marked "AID."

These letters represent the Agency for International Development, our new all-in-one foreign assistance program.

Hamilton must be a man of many and diverse talents. Once considered probable successor to master spy Allen Dulles, he now replaces a reserved Louisianian, Henry Labouisse, in the responsibility of giving away and lending billions of our dollars.

The change in mid-stream was necessitated by Congressional objection to George Woods, chairman of the First Boston Corporation, as AID administrator.

Woods is an extremely competent executive, but he crossed swords a few years back with Democratic Sen. Estes Kefauver and others on the Dixon-Yates power contract. And they don't make

memories much longer than those on Capitol Hill.

Labouisse has been connected with the foreign aid program since inception of the Marshall Plan. He is a quietly competent sort of fellow, but the Administration didn't consider him forceful enough to boss the giant new program.

At any rate, the White House will open other doors for him if he desires to stay in government service. And we assume he does.

Hamilton will be responsible for a host of aid functions which have been lumped together in order to streamline the program and eliminate some of its abuses. It would be a back-breaking task for any man.

Fortunately, Hamilton does not come as a novice to Washington. He was long ago initiated as special assistant to the attorney general, director of the Justice Department's War Frauds Division and director of economic warfare in our London embassy.

The fresh start in foreign aid probably deserves and needs a fresh hand at the throttle. We don't envy Mr. Hamilton the headaches of the next few years, but we wish him luck.